

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 06415 311425Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 DHA-05 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /042 W
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R 311348Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5183
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 6415

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS MOSCOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SCUL, RO
SUBJECT: NAZARENE CHURCH IN ROMANIA

1. SUMMARY. THERE APPEARS TO BE A GOOD CHANCE THAT THE
NAZARENE CHURCH IN ROMANIA WILL BE LEGALIZED. END SUMMARY.

2. USC ANDREW HUNYADY, ONE OF SENIOR LEADERS OF U.S. APOSTOLIC
CHRISTIAN (NAZARENE) CHURCH WHO HAS BEEN VISITING ROMANIA
PRIVATELY FOR LAST THREE WEEKS, BRIEFED POL COUNSELOR AUGUST 31
ON STATUS OF CHURCH IN ROMANIA. IT HAS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 2,500
AND 3,500 MEMBERS, MOSTLY LOCATED IN BANAT REGION OF WESTERN
ROMANIA. ROUGHLY HALF ARE ETHNIC ROMANIANS, REST IS EVENLY
SPLIT BETWEEN ETHNIC HUNGARIANS AND GERMANS. CHURCH
SPOKESMAN IS IOSIF LUNGU (TIMISOARA); OTHER MEMBERS
OF COUNCIL OF ELDERS ARE ILIE DUMBRAVA, STANISLAV
VULETIXCI, ALBERT SZABO, AVRAM RAMNEAMT, AND ALEXANDRU
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PAGE 02 BUCAR 06415 311425Z

VARTACIU. CHURCH IS NOT LEGALLY RECOGNIZED BY GOR, BUT
ITS ACTIVITIES ARE GENERALLY TOLERATED BY LOCAL ROMANIAN
AUTHORITIES. HUNYADY EXPLAINED LACK OF RECOGNITION AS
GENERALLY DUE TO REFUSAL BY LOCAL NAZARENES TO ENTER INTO
NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOR IN LATE FORTIES - EARLY FIFTIES
WHEN OTHER DENOMINATIONS WERE INVITED TO "REGULARIZE"
THEIR STATUS. REASON AT THE TIME WAS VAGUE QUESTION OF

RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE WHICH NO ONE TODAY CLEARLY RECALLS.
AT ANY EVENT, OPPORTUNITY PASSED AND NAZARENES HAVE BEEN
OUT IN THE COLD EVEN SINCE.

3. IN PERIOD AUGUST 16-20, HOWEVER, CHURCH LEADER LUNGU
WAS INVITED TO MEET WITH SENIOR GOR OFFICIAL OF COUNCIL
OF STATE (HUNYADY DID NOT RECALL WHOM) TO DISCUSS LEGALIZATION
OF CHURCH. OFFER WAS ALLEGEDLY MADE BY GOR REP THAT IF U.S.
NAZARENE CHURCH WOULD DEPOSIT DOLS 150 THOUSAND TO ACCOUNT
OF LOCAL CHURCH, GOR WOULD SIGN AGREEMENT GIVING NAZARENES
LEGAL STATUS EQUAL TO OTHER 14 RECOGNIZED DENOMINATIONS WHICH
INTER ALIA WOULD ALLOW THEM TO CONDUCT SERVICES LEGALLY AND
TO OPERATE CHURCH BUILDINGS. MONEY WOULD THEORETICALLY BE
USED EXCLUSIVELY BY LOCAL CHURCH TO REFURBISH SOME PRESENT
BUILDINGS, LEASE OTHERS, AND PROVIDE OTHER ANCILLARY
FACILITIES SUCH AS SONG BOOKS. GOR OFFER ALSO INCLUDED
PERMISSION FOR LUNGU AND SZABO TO VISIT U.S. TO EXPLAIN
TERMS TO U.S. CHURCH.

4. HUNYADY IS OPTIMISTIC U.S. CHURCH WILL FIND THE MONEY
AND AGREE TO PROVIDE IT. UPON RETURN TO U.S. AROUND
SEPTEMBER 10 (HE WILL VISIT SOME FAMILY MEMBERS IN BUDAPEST
NEXT WEEK), HE WILL CONTACT OTHER LEADERS OF CHURCH. IF
AGREEMENT IS OBTAINED, HE WILL TELEPHONE SZABO WHO IN TURN,
IN CONJUNCTION WITH LUNGU, WILL INFORM GOR THAT THE DEAL IS
ON. AFTER RETURN OF LUNGU/SZABO FROM U.S., AGREEMENT WOULD
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BUCAR 06415 311425Z

THEN BE NEGOTIATED AND SIGNED, HOPEFULLY IN NEXT MONTH OR TWO.

5. HUNYADY OPINED SUDDEN GOR WILLINGNESS TO MOVE ON THIS OLD
PROBLEM IS PARTLY DUE TO ROMANIA'S DESIRE TO ADD NAZARENE
FEATURE TO CSCE BELGRADE BASKET III CAP, AND PARTLY TO
PRECEDENT-SETTING AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN NAZARENES AND
HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT LAST SPRING.

6. POL COUNSELOR EXPRESSED OUR STRONG INTEREST IN THESE
PROCEEDINGS, OFFERED TO BE AS HELPFUL AS WE APPROPRIATELY
CAN BE, AND PROVIDED NAME OF ROMANIAN DESK OFFICER SILINS
AS DEPARTMENT POINT OF CONTACT. HUNYADY WAS VERY APPRECIATIVE
BUT SAW NO NEED FOR EVEN ANY INFORMAL USG ROLE AS LONG AS
THINGS STAY ON THE TRACK. AS NAZARENE CONTACTS IN U.S., HE
LISTED ROGER MUELLER, SYRACUSE, N.Y., TELEPHONE AC 315-446-5632
AND HIMSELF, COLUMBUS, OHIO, TELEPHONE AC 614-231-8508.
BARNES

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED MOSCOW.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Sent Date: 31-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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